

Using Student Presentations as an Assignment

Presentation assignments vary a great deal depending on the course, the topic, and the faculty member. Generally, there is no one perfect speaking assignment. Faculty should think about this assignment much the same way they would a writing assignment or project. It needs to assess specific outcomes related to the course. Here are a few questions to ask when planning a speaking assignment.

- *What is the purpose of the assignment? How does it help teach students or assess their learning?*
- *What outcomes will I assess? Are you looking for knowledge about the topic, presentation skills, the ability to conduct research?*
- *How much do students already know about public speaking and how much instruction will I provide?*
- *How much class time do I have for presentations? Do I want students presenting in class or creating video speeches to upload online?*
- *Do I want students to create a visual aid (slides, chart, or sample)?*
- *Do I want a written outline or sources?*
- *What am I assessing? Am I grading the information, the delivery, the appearance of the student, the flow of information? All of the above?*

Once you have a good idea of what you want, it can be helpful to put as much specific information as possible in the assignment so students know exactly how to prepare, and where they need to focus their energy and attention.

Help Prepare Your Students

It can be hard to know how much public speaking instruction and experience students have had before attending your class. Students often struggle with organization, creating visual aids, delivery, and their own fears and anxiety about public speaking. It can be helpful to ask the class to reflect on their comfort level. You can do this with a simple survey or through a one-minute reflection paper.

Students can also prepare themselves for presentations by accessing [Helping Students Present Like A Pro](#)

Assessment of Student Presentations

How you assess presentations depends on the goal of the assignment and the outcomes you have chosen. Common assessment categories include

- Information clarity, accuracy, and appropriateness
- Organization and flow
- Delivery
- Visual Presentation Aids
- Outlines and sources provided

Using a rubric can provide consistent evaluation criteria and ratings, offer information to students about specific areas of strength or weakness, and can be used as a guide for developing the speech if given with the assignment.